

Transformation

UU Community Church of Santa Monica
Small Group Ministry Facilitators
April 2013

Welcome and Explanations 5 minutes

Chalice Lighting

Spiritual transformation ... doesn't happen by accident. We need a repeated discipline, a genuine training, in order to let go of our old habits of mind and to find and sustain a new way of seeing.

– Jack Kornfield, Buddhist teacher

Check-in / On Our Hearts 15 minutes

Covenant

Our covenant includes a description of how we want to be with each other, ground rules for our time together, and our expectations for members of our group.

Readings

Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled with light.
Earth teach me suffering
as old stones suffer with memory.
Earth teach me humility
As blossoms are humble with beginning.
Earth teach me caring
as the mother who secures her young.
Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands all alone.
Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls on the ground.
Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars in the sky.
Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die in the fall.
Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed which rises in the spring.
Earth teach me to forget myself
as melted snow forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember kindness
as dry fields weep with rain.

- Ute prayer, quoted in *Earth Prayers from Around the World*

In her novel *Regeneration*, Pat Barker writes of a doctor who 'knew only too well how often the early stages of change or cure may mimic deterioration. Cut a chrysalis open, and you will find a rotting caterpillar. What you will never find is that mythical creature, half-caterpillar, half-butterfly, a fit emblem of the human soul, for those whose cast of mind leads them to seek such emblems. No, the process of transformation consists almost entirely of decay.'

- quoted by Rebecca Solnit

Questions for consideration:

1. Spring is a time of transformation, rebirth, and growth, celebrated across cultures in holidays such as Persian New Year, Easter, and the Spring Equinox. What transformation is going on in you as spring approaches?
2. What power do you have within yourself to grow? Share a story about how you are growing.
3. For many of us, another way to spell change and growth is "L-O-S-S." What have you given up order to change? What, if anything, did you gain?

Sharing 60 minutes

Closing Activity / Sharing Insights

Please share an insight you gained from our time together.

Closing Words

Perhaps the most important thing we bring to another person is the silence in us. Not the sort of silence that is filled with unspoken criticism or hard withdrawal. The sort of silence that is a place of refuge, of rest, of acceptance of someone as they are. We are all hungry for this other silence. It is hard to find. In its presence we can remember something beyond the moment, a strength on which to build a life. Silence is a place of great power and healing.

- Rachel Naomi Remen